

IN MEMORIAM: PROFESSOR SIDNEY WALLACE, MD (1929-2013) THE INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGICAL COMMUNITY MOURNS A LEGENDARY PIONEER: A SHORT GLANCE AT HISTORY

Sidney Wallace, a legend of his time in Interventional Radiology, passed away on May 25, 2013, at the age of 84.

Sid was born in Philadelphia in 1929 and grew up in his father's kosher meat market «a natural transition into surgery», Sid commented. He obtained his MD degree at Temple University School of Medicine in 1950 and entered a one year residency in surgery at Philadelphia General Hospital. Sid spent two years as a surgeon in the US Army, from 1956 to 1958, stationed in Korea and Japan. Thereafter, Sid became attracted by «the light or darkness however you want to look at it» of radiology and started residency training at Jefferson Medical College Hospital in Philadelphia. In 1963, like most of the radiologists interested in angiography, he spent a one year fellowship at the Department of Radiology of the University Hospital of Lund, Sweden, headed by Olle Ollson. Lund at that time was the «Mecca» of diagnostic angiography. Sid was sent to the barium section for a couple of months before being finally assigned to angiography, where he met with Erik Boijesen and Anders Lunderquist, with whom he continued to cooperate until retirement. In 1969, Sid was appointed Professor of Radiology at the Department of Diagnostic Radiology of MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas, where he spent his entire medical career. In 1989, he became Division Head of Diagnostic Imaging and Department Chairman of Diagnostic Radiology and in retirement Professor Emeritus.

Sidney Wallace was a one of the most fertile creators and inventors in interventional radiology.

Those of us, who have practised lymphangiography, remember his groundbreaking series of publications on the diagnostic and therapeutic potential of the procedure and introduction of ultrafluid Lipiodol as a lymphatic contrast medium. Sid described cannulation of the lymphatic channels as «giving an enema to a flea». He also popularized percutaneous lymph node biopsy under lymphangiographic guidance.

Furthermore, Sid performed percutaneous biliary drainage for the first time in the USA in 1962-1963 and promoted percutaneous hepatic abscess drainage as an alternative to surgery, before the advent of cross-section imaging.

Most of his work however was devoted to cancer treatment. Sid had a determinant influence on the introduction and development of arterial tumor embolization, chemo-embolization and chemo-infusion. He had submitted himself to preoperative renal cancer embolization. Sid had started micro-encapsulation work as early as 1975 and continued working on Tamoxifen after retirement.

The collaboration at MD Anderson, of Sid Wallace and Cesare Gianturco, another giant in the field of radiological intervention, was extremely beneficial. The creative imagination of both had given birth to a great variety of original devices and techniques, all nowadays in daily practice. They advocated systematic heparinization during diagnostic angiography, did the preliminary work on percutaneously placed vena cava filters and experimented on the first wooly tail arterial embolization spring coils. After vessel occlusion, they thought about permanent vessel opening. Gianturco had designed the first angioplasty balloon catheter that was used only in one patient. Around 1980, Sid inspired Cesare to devise the first stainless steel selfexpanding vascular zig-zag stents, which came up five years later. The Radiology Department at MD Anderson has been working on vascular and non vascular stent development ever since. Bill Cook, another early entrepreneur in intervention, recognized the potential of the newly conceived devices and was highly instrumental in their spread among the medical community through his company.

Although Sidney Wallace had focused his pioneer work on the development of devices, techniques and pharmaceuticals, patients remained always his primary concern. From the beginning, Sid believed strongly in the advantages of a multidisciplinary approach in the treatment of cancer patients, which he put into practice at MD Anderson. The Department of Radiology grew up under his leadership to tremendous dimensions while MD Anderson Cancer Center was recognized the best Tumor Institute in the USA.

Sid was an accomplished radiologist, clinician and researcher and in addition a remarkable teacher. Sid put during all his life great energy and verve in teaching the next generations, lecturing tirelessly throughout the world on the radiological contribution to management of cancer patients. His loud and plain convincing voice captured immediately the attention of the audience until the end of his talk.

Sid spoke on several occasions at combined meetings of the Belgian Surgical, Gastro-enterological and Radiological Societies.

Together with Anders Lunderquist and others, he conceived a special hands-on, one week teaching programme in intervention in the animal lab. These courses run regularly at MD Anderson in Houston, in Malmö and in Liège and were taken over later in other places.

Sid was a gentle and cultured man, full of humor, always in good mood and much devoted to friendship. He placed utmost importance in his faith. Beside being a talented interventional radiologist, Sid was a gifted artist, cantor, song writer, cartoonist, painter and sculptor. The center of Sid's life was his family. He is survived by his beloved wife Marsha, without whom he never travelled abroad and three children who carry on their parents' talents: Stewart is a music composer, Andrea a movie costume designer and Michael an interventional radiologist at MD Anderson.

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